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FEMINIST TIMES

A monthly statewide journal of news and issues

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Petition Drives Seek Signatures at the Polls

by Jan Anderson

MAINE -- Three petition organizers will be at the polls in Maine on Election Day, Nov. 4, seeking to put questions before the people.

The Committee to Stop Corporate Welfare is seeking signatures to allow a referendum vote on whether or not Maine should give \$60 million in tax breaks to General Dynamics and Bath Iron Works. CLEAN, Citizens for Livable Environment in Alliance with Nature, the organization headed by Nancy Oden, is seeking to ban the introduction of pesticides into Maine's waters.

Both petition drives are in large

part a response to the steady flow of news stories that demonstrate either a misuse of public money or threats to health and safety through misuse of chemicals. Two recent stories in the *Maine Sunday Telegram* gave ample evidence of questionable use of taxes. A Sept. 28 feature story on mercury contamination of Maine's water and fish noted that fresh-water fish consumption is dangerous to human health and is killing the loon population. The article quoted Gov. Angus King as saying, "Mercury is a more serious problem to Maine health than dioxin." The article also noted that although the major source of mercury contamination is airborne

from smoke stacks in the Midwest, a chemical manufacturing company in Orrington, Holtra Chem Manufacturing, contributes considerable mercury to our atmosphere and water in the process of creating chlorine gas and caustic soda for the paper industry. The plant cannot afford the new technology which would keep this mercury from the discharge. This is a story that affects both petition drives: Why can Maine afford to give tax money to General Dynamics, a wealthy, major, multinational corporation but not to a company in Maine to clean up mercury contamination, a gift that would have

(Continued on page 4)

Women in the News

by Mollie Hoben

Are women newsworthy? Based on the message our daily newspapers serve up to us every morning, the answer would seem to be, not very.

In the 1997 Minnesota Women's Press newspaper survey, women's names accounted for 21 percent of all names on the prominent pages of the *Star Tribune* and *St. Paul Pioneer Press*. In other words, about one in five news subjects and source were women. Overall totals haven't changed much since the study began in 1988, when women's names comprised 17 percent of all names in the news.

The Twin Cities aren't unique. Over the years, findings here have been consistent with results of a similar survey conducted nationally by the Women, Men and Media project. Unfortunately, lack of funding shut down that survey this year.

The first Women's Press survey was met with yawns by local journalists in 1988. When told that only 17 percent of names in his newspaper were women's, the managing editor of the *Star Tribune* told Minnesota Women's Press that he saw "no obvious problems or holes." The editor of the alternative *Twin Cities Reader*, whom we approached for comment, dismissed news about women, describing it as "too soft" in contrast to real news, "crime, scandal, ... things people think seriously about."

Some things have changed since then. These days when the survey results are announced, editors consistently express concern and assure us that they want their newspapers to do better. And we believe them.

Despite newsrooms being reorganized, public journalism challenging traditional assumptions, greater awareness and responsiveness to readers, women -- as subjects or sources of news -- still tend to be the sidebars rather than the headlines of daily news. Some critics of our survey point out that although women are half the population, they don't fill half the important positions in the state/nation/world: Few women are presidents, legislators, heads of multinational corporations. Likewise, women don't do half the interesting things in the world -- headline-grabbing actions such

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Homework and Kids: A Conversation with

Etta Kralovec

by Donna Gold

Etta Kralovec is first and foremost, an educator. She has an Ed.D. in philosophy from Teacher's College of Columbia University, has taught in public schools for a dozen years and is now director of teacher education at College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor. With that background, you'd expect her to insist that children keep their noses to their books in school and at home. But no. Kralovec is an educator on a crusade against homework. What's going on?

Q. How can a teacher not believe in homework?

A. I believe there's an unexamined assumption that homework is good.

Q. Well, isn't it?

A. People quote a study that shows that kids who do more homework do better in school, that homework increases academic performance and teaches self-discipline. But they don't ask the prior questions: Who is able to do the homework? How does the assigning of homework force people into unequal situations?

I think we can look at the issues of class bias in homework and ask whether or not equal educational opportunity is helped by homework



practices.

And other questions might be: Do kids need free time? Kids are in school for eight hours a day, is it good for the development of the whole child to expect them to do another hour and a half of school-like work at home? Is homework in the best interest of the child?

Q: So you're saying that kids need more time?

A: Even more fundamentally, homework requirements raise questions about what

kind of society we want to have. Do we want to enroll our kids in a kind of corporate model of life, where they work 12 hours a day? Do we want to be families that spend our evenings fighting about whether or not the unfinished work of the school day is done?

Q. But most of us do work, and so our nights are pretty harried anyway. I always think that homework gives the kids something to do so the parents can wind down, make dinner.

(Continued on page 6.)

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Statement of Purpose

FEMINIST TIMES was created to give attention to the feminist perspective on issues, asking questions that have not been asked; to shine a spotlight on women of achievement in business, politics, education and the arts; and is committed to providing a forum for women to express their view on local and world events -- a viewpoint that is often ignored, overlooked or misconstrued in the mainstream media. Our goal is to ask questions and inspire a dialogue on a diverse range of issues. We hope to challenge our readers to consider new points of view, and we would like to uphold the ideals of the feminist movement -- to reclaim and honor the title "feminist" for women.

Editorial

The *Feminist Times* lost one of its best advertisers this month. BJ's Auto has been advertising since the first issue, determined to open the auto repair business to qualified women technicians and make the garage a woman-friendly place.

There is no way to pay for the operation of a newspaper except through advertising. There are significant costs in the production process and writers and contributors. There is a lot of volunteer labor, but it is not found on our pages.

Without the support of advertisers willing to make long-term commitments, the *Feminist Times* will not survive. Readers and writers who benefit from having this source of information and affirmation of women's achievements need to support them with your business. But don't keep it a secret; tell the business where you saw their ad. It would be a valuable acknowledgment to business owners that the reader appreciates their support of this alternative press.

There are many reasons to support an alternative to the mainstream press, not least of which is the realization that the press mediates between people in the news and the public. How many of our readers know that Hillary Clinton is a hero around the world, that there are highways and airports and streets and even villages named after her? How many of our readers know that when she travels outside of the United States, women around the world come to her and repeat the text of the speech she gave at the Women's Conference in Beijing; that women have memorized her words? How many of our readers know that when Hillary Clinton delivered her scathing comments on the litany of abuses of women around the world in that speech in Beijing, concluding, "It is time to break our silence. It is time for us to say here in Beijing, and the world to hear, that it is no longer acceptable to discuss women's rights as separate from human rights," the delegates from the 180 nations leaped onto chairs and cheered for more than 20 minutes? What we read about Hillary Clinton in the mainstream press would lead us to think she is discredited and disgraced. We are told her strength as a human being has made her husband, the president, look weak and that she is trying to figure out how to be a thinker and a doer -- be herself -- without arousing hostility from those around her who feel she is overstepping her bounds. Will any of us ordinary people be able to step forward and take our place in the world if the first lady cannot? We need the mainstream press to do more to portray the truth and reality of the women of the world; and we need the alternative press to provide the much needed balance when the mainstream press lacks the insight or courage to do it.

Breast Cancer can be good for business

by Molly Ivins

And now for something completely different on Breast Cancer Awareness Month. I use the word "completely" with some confidence, as I know of very few other sources for what I'm about to tell you.

The mainstream media have this awareness stuff taped by now; we're supposed to tell women to get mammograms, stick to low-fat diets and study estrogen replacement therapy carefully.

Let me make a few other suggestions: DDT, dioxin, Agent Orange, vinyl chloride, CFCs, chlordane, benzene and 11,000 other varieties of organochlorines, 40 million tons of them produced annually. You are eating, breathing and drinking some of this toxic stew, every day, no matter where you live, and your body is contaminated with organochlorines.

People with breast cancer tend to have very high levels of organochlorines in their bodies. Likewise, women exposed to unusually high levels of organochlorines -- such as chemical workers and farm workers -- have unusually high rates of breast cancer. Even the medical establishment admits that no more than 50 percent of breast cancer cases (cancer groups say no more than one-third of the cases) can be attributed to diet, family history and hormones.

Why does the cancer establishment refuse to look at the obvious? Because it is beholden to the chemical establishment, and they are often one and the same.

Do you know who originally sponsored Breast Cancer Awareness Month - who approved every promo kit, pamphlet, news release, radio spot, print ad and video? Imperial Chemical Industries, a \$14 billion-a-year maker of pesticides, plastics, pharmaceuticals and paper -- organochlorines are a specialty.

This information comes from Jim Hightower's new book, *There's Nothing in the Middle of the Road but Yellow Stripes and Dead Armadillos*, published by Harper Collins.

According to Hightower, Imperial Chemical was the sole financial sponsor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month from the event's inception, but in 1993, one of ICI's corporate daughters, called Zeneca Group, split off, taking with it the pharmaceutical and agrichemical divisions as well as the Breast Cancer Awareness Month program. Zeneca remains a key funder of awareness month and retains complete control of its message. Zeneca's pharmaceutical arm is also the maker of Nolvadex, the leading drug used in breast cancer treatment.

Think about that: First, they make money from the organochlorines that some say are linked to breast cancer; then they urge us all to go out and get mammograms to detect the cancer; then they make money trying to cure it.

A study by the Institute of Chemical Toxicology at Wayne State University showed that when DDT and another organochlorine were administered individually, they caused breast cells to proliferate but only when present at a very high rate.

But when the organochlorines were given in combination, they triggered cell increases similar to those associated with concentrations of estradiol, an endogenous estrogen that many think could be involved in the development of breast cancer. In other words, a combination of organochlorines, which we're all getting, mimics what some believe is a natural cause of breast cancer.

The World Health Organization predicts that the number of cancer deaths throughout the world will double in most countries during the next 25 years. If you read the business pages, you can follow a charming struggle among the pharmaceutical companies as they buy each other out to gain dominance in this "attractive emerging market." But there is good news from Israel where the government reports a 30 percent drop in breast cancer rates after the country banned three cancer-causing pesticides.

All in all, Breast Cancer Awareness Month offers some serious material for awareness.
 Molly Ivins is a columnist for the Fort Worth Star Telegram.

What's Funny Now?

by Lorraine Brown

GOD ... WHAT A CONCEPT!

Between death, back spasms and the Christian right I've been thinking about God a lot lately.

For instance, take back spasms. Pacing around the room with an ice cube melting down your bum is a great time to contemplate the Almighty. I ask myself what is it exactly that God wants me to learn from this excruciating pain. I review all the possibilities. Does God wish to teach me that life is fraught with unexpected difficulty? I begin a serious conversation in which I admit that I've been too busy and generally off track. I attempt to make a deal. I say, "God, I think that I understand what it is you're trying to get at here. I have erred, no question about it. I have not been taking care of this precious vehicle, me, in the manner that you intended. I will change. I promise. Just give me this one last chance and from now on I will live a healthy moderate life." I continue to pace and wait for God to respond.

Then my best friend dies. Magnificent, courageous, difficult woman. Once again I pace and I continue my conversation with the Large One. Not because I feel inclined to speak to God at this point but because I can't think of anything else worth doing. I say, "Clearly the time for deals has passed and anyway You reneged on Your part. I no longer believe that I know what you're trying to get at here. Maybe You were out to lunch? Perhaps You fell asleep on the job? Were You busy elsewhere?" I begin to shout, "Likely I'm talking to No one." Continuing to pace, I wait for God to respond.

Now I hear on the news that some people who have named themselves Christians are working hard to repeal the possibility of civil rights for one segment

of Maine's residents. By calling civil rights "special rights" these people are intimating that it's an exceptional privilege to expect to be safe from prejudice and harassment in one's home, at work or in the streets. Pacing once again, I speak. "Help me with this," I say, "why are You allowing these people to use Your name in order to lie about their own fear and hatred? Does it make You angry, God, to be used in this way? Are You impervious to it? Are You taking an extra long lunch hour?" Moving madly around the room, I wait for God to respond.

Unlike some, who claim intimate acquaintance with the Big Enchilada, I am not privy to God's thoughts in regard to the following issues: abortion, false prophecy, sexuality, hunting, back pain, death, heaven or even cowardice and hypocrisy. One of the very few things that I know for certain, is that God has a complex sense of humor. I do have hopes though. I hope that there is interesting and meaningful work waiting for me when I arrive in God's home, improved color schemes, no calories, gourmet vegetarian meals, varied sex and lots of it, rampant kindness, great music, new dance steps, drag queens, superb literature, unusual genders, loads of furry creatures and a classless system. I hope that in the inevitable review of my life, standing before God for that all important cozy chat, my many good intentions will weigh in when my many bad thoughts and laziness are noted. I hope that God Herself is beyond gender and I pray fervently that God is not a self-satisfied, pontificating white guy taking up too much space in the sky, thinking of Himself as everybody's stern Papa. I hope that God is not that white guy's falsely virtuous Christian wife. I hope God

has more wit than to have come up with some of the banal sayings attributed to Him such as "cleanliness is next to... I hope that God will take significant disciplinary measures with those who are cruel and unjust in His name, particularly Muslim terrorists, pedophiles and the Christian right wing, if only to dissuade them from further ventures into the shadowed lands.

However, I try hard not to confuse my personal hopes and desires with what I know to be real. And when the subject is God, it can be difficult to separate what is known from what is desired.

Personally, I experience the desire to know and be known by God as a sharp, inconvenient, exhilarating longing. I can't even say it's elusive, not really. It's a glowing beckoning sense/thought form. The taste of the Divine just departed from the human tongue. It's the "promise" of a perfect, throbbing, glorious, wild, all loving, light filled, fluid, intelligent, sexy Grace. Hidden behind the Himalayas, continuous typhoons, massive earthquakes, constant rearrangement of the planets, all appearing to manifest for the sole purpose of concealing the Great One from human sight. Issued to each one of us is the tiniest, most breakable teaspoon. Sending us unclothed, deaf, blind and wheezing on the only journey that matters. In search of God. And sometimes it appears that a very unfunny jester is directing traffic having usurped the Large One's place. On this I am supposed to base my life?

It seems to me that I often strain to hear the distant sound of God laughing... or weeping. Perhaps in the mind of God they are one and the same.

Letters:

Dear Editor,

I commend Jennifer Hersey on her thorough coverage of the nursing crisis in managed health care. It is patently unethical for managed care providers to prohibit nursing staff from having their professional status identified on their pin. Truth in advertising laws would mandate that the consumer (hospital patient) have the facts about the care provided in the hospital and the right to make a decision to accept or refuse care from unqualified caregivers. So-called "unlicensed assistive personnel" should be prohibited from direct patient care.

Susan Ogden
Portland

Dear Editor,

I wasn't surprised to read in Jennifer Hersey's article on the nursing crisis in managed care that doctors are compensated differently than nurses. As with many "care-giving" professions, it is assumed if a man is doing it, it must be difficult, but if a woman is doing it, anyone can do it.

It is time for the nursing profession to realize it needs to organize into a union to protect its fragile relationship to patients and hospitals. In a union, nurses have more power and more of a voice in decisions that directly affect the profession.

Carolyn Smith
Lewiston

Dear Editor,

In your October 1997 issue, an advertisement (I hope) with the headline, Important Health News for Women About the Mammogram written by E. A. Hildreth, M.D. of Philadelphia, Pa., was featured. This sarcastic and, I believe, dangerous advertisement compared a mammogram to putting ones' breasts through a pasta maker or running them over with a car! If it was not the intent, then I'm concerned it will be the result: women will be discouraged from having a mammogram, a procedure that could save their lives.

Breast cancer is the No. 1 killer of women between the ages of 35-54. One hundred and 84 thousand women are diagnosed each year, there are 40,000 deaths. The cause is not known and there is no way to prevent it. Therefore, it is important to detect breast cancer early, when it is at its most treatable, whether one chooses an alternative path or the western medicine path. Monthly self-breast exam, clinical exam followed by mammography are the best way to detect breast disease. Given what we know and don't know about breast cancer, I found your choosing to feature this ad (?) irresponsible and not advocating for women's health.

As a feminist and women's health advocate who has worked in the field of women's health for more than 11 years, I understand the barriers women face when deciding whether or not to have a mammogram, fear of pain and being uncomfortable is one they voice often. I think it is important to be truthful

to share with women that there may be some discomfort, the things they can do to alleviate it and regardless of the pain and discomfort, how important it is to have a mammogram. Not to reinforce and increase the fear they have, as the article you printed would do.

I urge you to please review your advertising/editorial policy. Your readers need to know that you are truly committed to elevating the health and well-being of women because you will only work with advertisers that share this commitment.

Tory Leuteman, Director
Mid Coast Family Planning

(Ed note: The piece was not an ad, it was

meant to be humorous. It was laugh-tested on our women friends over 50 who have had many mammography experiences, and passed. But you are right, breast cancer is not a laughing matter.)

Dear Editor:

I've enjoyed and benefited from your paper for a long time and it's time to fess up. Please put me on your subscription list. You provide a great service to all of us.

Yours truly,
Will Browne
Lincolnville Beach

ATTENTION YOUNG WRITERS!

The Editor of the *Feminist Times* received a letter from the editors of *The Pine Tree Progressive*, a publication of high school writers with editorial offices in Jefferson seeking young women writers who would like to write about women's issues. They also seek subscribers, of course.

Two young men, Justin and Joshua Jackson edit the alternative publication which is filled with news and opinions you probably wouldn't see in a mainstream publication.

I am pleased to recommend this publication to young women who would like to express their view of the world around them. We share with them a hope that young women will write about their experiences and how they are making their mark in their respective communities.

Submit articles to the *Pine Tree Progressive* at POB 227, Jefferson, 04348; or call 549-5054.

Submit to *Feminist Times* at 309 High St., Belfast, 04915; or call 338-1429.

Thanks to Justin and Josh for this fine effort and our best wishes for their continued effort.

Women in the News *(Continued from page 1.)*

as committing violent crimes, running drugs, fighting wars.

No wonder women's names don't appear half the time in news stories, these critics say. It may be unfortunate or unfair, but women just are not as newsworthy as men. Nonsense, we say. It's time for some fresh perspectives. It's time to get radical.

As readers, we want news that reflects our world as it really is, news that helps us understand the world better so we can be good citizens and make informed decisions. We also want our newspapers to tell us engaging stories, help us feel connected to our community and the world, and, at least sometimes, touch our hearts.

We believe this is what journalists want, too. But the truth is this: News that's more than three-fourths men just won't do it. Dominated by men, their actions and their words, this "news" gives readers a skewed picture of the world, and it robs them of useful and moving stories.

The problem journalists face is not a lack of newsworthy women; the problem is a definition of "newsworthy" that leaves women out. Lessons from the women's movement illuminate this problem, and they suggest ways to expand the definition of newsworthy that will enrich the news for everybody.

Profound change often occurs from the bottom up. Feminism, which has had an immense impact on every

aspect of American culture, began and continues as a grassroots movement. Like other successful grassroots efforts, the women's movement had laid the foundation and was busy putting up walls long before traditional sources of news -- government and other institutions -- even heard the sounds of the hammers.

Big news was happening. It was changing the country, it had excitement and passion, it had great stories -- and it was, and continues to be, largely unreported. A list of female newsmakers long enough to warrant its own overflowing Rolodex has gone untapped.

Like feminism, grassroots efforts of all kinds in this country are fueled largely by female power. A definition of newsworthiness that recognized these efforts would bring readers news with an impact as well as news with an abundance of women's names.

Every issue is a women's issue. This was one of the clearest lessons from the U.N. world women's conference held in Beijing two years ago. The key public players may still be men, but traditional "hard news" -- like economic development, war and peace, international trade, politics -- all effect women's lives as much as men's. Since women and girls are half the population, every report on these topics logically should include equal numbers of women's and men's voices. Women's

perspectives are essential for meaningful discussion and full understanding of the issues.

A corollary is the recognition that traditional "women's issues" -- such as child care, violence against women, gender equity -- are truly community issues. They effect not just women, but also men, the economy and the overall health of the community. These are not "special interest" stories but the essence of "hard news," for which women are primary sources.

The personal is political. This old chestnut from early feminist organizing should become a newsroom mantra. Personal struggles and achievements not only make for good human interest stories, they also are a necessary tool for understanding complex public policy issues. And, by definition, the personal story is not limited to traditional newsmakers, so telling more personal stories increases the opportunities to get more women's names in the news.

These lessons have not been lost on some journalists who are concerned about making newspapers more appealing and relevant to all their readers. An examination of front pages over the past decade clearly shows an evolving definition of "newsworthy."

But change is slow. At the rate measured by the Minnesota Women's Press survey over the past nine years,

achieving a balance of women's and men's names in the newspapers will take until the year 2060. Perhaps a radical step is in order: a newsroom mandate that all stories must have as many women's names as men's names. (Or, when that would be too awkward, that any story heavily laden with men's names must be offset by a woman-heavy story.)

What a hue and cry this would cause! We can hear the objections now: This is nothing less than manipulating the news to fit an agenda. It will result in biased news and/or non-news. We'll have to leave out some important news, ignore some interesting sources.

To these concerns, women readers might well respond: What's new? But, cynicism aside, let's be honest about the news process. Every assignment editor knows that news is about choices. There's always more news than fits the news hole, and whatever ends up in the paper is there because it fits someone's bias. In fact, the working definition of "newsworthy" tends to create a bias against news of women. Lessons from the women's movement can help journalists take this slant out of the news, giving readers a more accurate and more engaging picture of the world. The truth is, when women make the news, the news gets better.

Compiled from an article from The Center for Feminist Journalism, Minnesota Women's Press Inc., St. Paul, Minn.

Petition Drives Seek Signatures at the Polls... *(Continued from page 1)*

far-reaching benefits to Maine people?

The second story was about computer software companies that were invited by Gov. King to relocate to Maine with the assurance of a friendly business atmosphere and good computer programmers. The reality apparently is far different: The executives of the company said Maine is too slow to accommodate their needs, graduates too few computer programmers, and it is too difficult to get financing. Why is it that General Dynamics can easily obtain a \$60 million tax gift, but these very important software manufacturing firms get loans? If Maine really wants to attract this kind of business to Maine, why not make that \$60 million available to them?

There seems to be no shortage of tax money when it is to shore up the bottom line of a large corporation; but where is the money for children's health care or education spending or keeping up the state's share of the health insurance premium on retired teachers? When it comes to the young and the old, tax money cannot be found.

On Oct. 15, General Dynamics reported a 20 percent increase in earnings in the third quarter -- \$82 million, up from the third quarter last year of \$68 million, or \$1.08 a share. Sales rose from \$862 million to \$988 million. The report said General Dynamics had

purchased Lucent Technologies, which manufactures undersea surveillance and signal processing defense systems for \$284 million cash.

"Even after this acquisition, General Dynamics still has approximately \$600 million in cash, virtually no debt, and ample financial capacity," Chairman Nicholas D. Chabreja said in a statement. "We continue to explore opportunities to enhance our strategic position."

He said that the defense appropriations bill signed by President Clinton last week funded all of the company's major programs.

This is not a company that needs Maine's tax money. The \$194 million they are receiving over 20 years -- \$81 million from the city of Bath, \$53 million from the governor in equipment tax breaks, and \$60 million in employee tax credits -- is insignificant to General Dynamics. It is incredibly important to Maine.

Is corporate welfare a bad thing? Not always. If it is in response to NEED. But help might not be in the form of tax breaks.

On Oct. 17, at the Governor's Economic Development Conference, Maine's tax and fiscal system was rated 10th best in the nation by the Corporation for Enterprise Development, a nonprofit

organization in Washington, D.C. Its president, Brian Dabson spoke at the conference. This rating is based on fairness and stability. Fairness being the most important. If large, wealthy corporations do not pay their share of the tax burden, we either go without the goods and services the people of Maine need, or small businesses and individuals have to make up the difference.

Dabson pointed out that sustained business growth can only be achieved through better education and training and investment in research and development. Yet Maine is 50th in the United States for private research spending per capita.

General Dynamics, the owner of Bath Iron Works, is the third largest defense contractor in the United States: 92 percent of its revenue comes from defense manufacturing. Its biggest customer is the U.S. government, but who are the customers of defense and weapons manufacturers when it is not the US government?

Weapons manufacturers persuade the Pentagon to spend billions on research and development of new, sophisticated weapons which they then justify building and selling to foreign customers as a way to make back the money spent on the research, development and manufacturing.

What are the ethics of selling sophisticated American-made weapons to countries that may some day oppose us in war?

President Eisenhower said in 1953 in one of his first speeches after being elected president: "Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies in a final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not fed; those who are cold and not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone -- it is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children."

How to respond to foreign governments' demand for American-made weapons is the most important question facing the United States this decade.

Some people say this is just business as usual.

What is business as usual? Why are we asked to accept it? The BIW petition drive seeks to move business as usual out of the murky shadows and into the light of day. This petition drive is a statement of belief in the right of the people to be heard.

Male Models Don't Work... *for girls*

By Susan Carney

BETHEL -- At Goodwill Hinckley, a century-old residential treatment facility in central Maine for troubled adolescents, many of whom arrive from the Maine Youth Center, only girls must attend family-planning classes on birth control and safe sex.

The boys are on their own.

So Goodwill staff members Melinda Mroz, Carol Garnett and Patricia Gordon aren't too surprised when already-struggling teen-age girls blame themselves when they end up pregnant and, often, alone.

Last month, while attending Maine's first statewide conference addressing the gender-specific treatment needs of adolescent girls, called "Working With Girls at Risk," the trio decided to empower the girls by educating the boys. They mapped out an action plan to put every boy on campus in family-planning classes, too.

Their goal is to emphasize that while each individual -- male or female -- has total control over his or her own body, when two people decide to have sex, they share the responsibility for preventing pregnancy, or for dealing with it if it happens.

"[The girls] shouldn't feel like everything is their fault all the time," said Mroz. "They don't have to be victims. So many times they come in with that mindset: once a victim, always a victim."

"We want to teach them self-respect," added Gordon.

"Self-respect" and "empowerment" were the buzzwords throughout the two-day conference at the Bethel Inn as representatives from

20 human services agencies came up with their own plans to instill survival skills in girls who are at risk of everything from involvement in the juvenile justice system to teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, physical and sexual abuse, substance abuse, dropping out of school or running away.

The conference was co-sponsored by Crossroads for Women, a Portland-based substance abuse treatment agency that specializes in treating women, and Day One, also in Portland, a substance abuse treatment agency that works with adolescents and families. Maine's Office of Substance Abuse and the Frances Hollis Brain Foundation funded the event.

Organizers hoped the conference would launch a dialogue and increase coordination among agencies, as well as identify treatment techniques and tools to enable at-risk girls to make better choices and live safer, healthier lives.

A fundamental component of the conference was the emphasis on "gender-specific," a concept that acknowledges that the differences in male and female psychology warrant different methods of treatment.

"Girls deal with different issues than boys," said Sherry Hanson, a clinician with Crossroads for Women. Adolescence appears to be a much more difficult time for girls than for boys, she said, and both boys and girls know it. In a Michigan study Hanson cited that asked boys what they would do if they woke up tomorrow as a girl, many boys expressed what Hanson described as "horror," and said they would kill themselves.

While both boys and girls must find a way to "fit" in society, Hanson

said, the pressures on girls are unique because of cultural conditions.

Girls are judged much more on appearance than boys, said Hanson, and they go to schools that still foster the stereotype that girls aren't as good as boys in some subject areas, that ignore girls' achievements, tolerate unequal treatment, and that fail to cope with sexual harassment.

Girls must feel safe in treatment, said Hanson, and that safety is generally missing in mixed gender groups because girls realize that boys often receive more attention. Consequently, the girls hold back.

Gender-specific work got some attention in the field of substance abuse in the 1970s, primarily because the unisex treatment model was not working, according to Lynn Duby, director of the state Office of Substance Abuse, who spoke at the conference. Women were not entering treatment in numbers proportional to their representation as alcoholics, and those who did often found it did not meet their needs.

There was a "burst" of interest in programs tailored to women, said Duby, but it was short-lived.

As demands for treatment accountability have grown in recent years, however, interest in gender-specific programming has revived.

The need has also grown as the number of women in prison has grown, including female juvenile offenders.

But at-risk girls are not found just behind bars. According to conference organizer Mary Lyons, co-author of the research report, "Gender-Specific Best Treatment Practices for Substance-Abusing Juvenile Female Offenders," it is nearly impossible to quantify the total

population of at-risk adolescent girls, in Maine or nationally, any more narrowly than to say it numbers in the "thousands." At-risk girls may also be in the custody of the Department of Human Services, or they may still live at home, or they might be living on the streets.

What is known, however, is that the numbers are growing as society changes.

"Girls are sexualized at a much earlier age," said Lyons. "They don't have a chance to develop the internal self-regulation necessary to be protected."

Drugs and alcohol are also readily available, and users are starting sooner. Gang-related activities and violence are escalating. And, ironically, the advancement of women's rights has allowed girls to become "more like the boys," who have traditionally filled juvenile correctional facilities.

The future direction of gender-specific training and treatment programs in Maine will emerge from this conference, said Lyons, and will depend partly on funding.

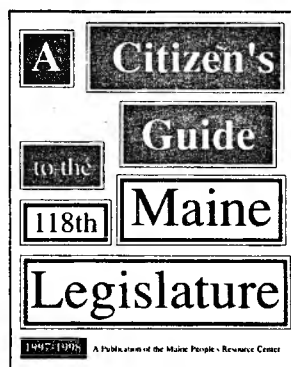
She is optimistic that the Office of Substance Abuse will fund the next stage: helping individual agencies like Goodwill Hinckley implement the action plans they developed during the conference.

"We'd like to see people changing the way they work with young women," said Lyons, "to deal with them on their own terms, instead of [relying] on a male model or a unisex model."

(This article first appeared in the Bangor Daily News)



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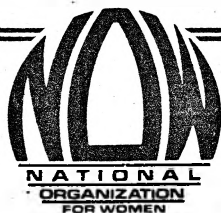
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Homework and Kids (Continued from page 1.)

A. Everyone needs some decompression time after work, but I remember coming home to one child in her bedroom doing homework so I never really saw her, and my other child was in a tizzie because he couldn't do his homework. I would rather have baked cookies or done an art project than fight over math homework. The quality of family life is now undermined by homework fights.

For most of us just hanging out with our kids is a very relaxing activity. If we could just hang out with them, instead of having to be overseers over them. It takes away from our ability to relax with them, makes our time more stressful.

Q. So what do other parents say?

A. Typically the first response is, What a crazy idea, school without homework -- how can you even think that's possible? Then I ask them to reflect for a week about what their home life is like because of homework. They call me back and say, you're right, it really does intrude, or homework makes my kid so stressed out, they don't have time to design their own free time, to socialize, to daydream, whatever.

Q. You mean home problems with homework are common?

A. It's almost like a recovery group. In the conferences I've talked at, and talk shows I've done, the most surprising thing is the relief people feel at being able to talk about it, "Oh yes, I have so much trouble with my seventh-grader because of homework..." It's a relief for people to realize they're not a bad parent if their kid doesn't go to their room every night and do homework.

Q: How did you come to think that homework might be a problem?

A: I conducted a study for the Maine Department of Education on successful dropout programs. One of our findings was that there was a strong correlation between dropout rates and the kids' perception that homework drove them out of school. Then my son entered sixth grade and I began to have my own homework battles.

Q: Wait, did kids really say that homework drove them from school?

A: We asked students who dropped out of school when they knew they wouldn't make it in school. Every single one had a homework story. Either they were sick for a long time and couldn't catch up, or their parent worked at night and they had no one to help with their homework, or no one to sign the homework.

Q. But isn't there a place for homework? Can't it help kids to work on their own?

A. In an ideal world, it would be great for kids to go home and work on exciting, stimulating independent projects. A better question to ask would be, when you send an independent project home, how do you ensure that it be done independently? And if you can't, is it fair to ask kids to do home projects when the resources at home are so unequal, where some kids have no books, no computers, parents who are uneducated and/or unable to provide time and help?

My kids went to school in Bar Harbor and the Jackson Lab kids would come in with these massive genetic research projects, and then some other kid would come with a plant grown in a tennis shoe. Actually, the kid that grew the plant on their own probably learned more...

Q. So homework emphasizes the inequality?

A. Yes. You know, I was in Zimbabwe last year and it was the same thing. Those with electricity would do better than those without. The boys would do better than girls, because the girls had to come home and do all the housework, while the boys would be able to do homework while it was still light.

Q. Do you remember doing homework as a kid?

A. I considered school an imposition on my social life. I wanted to jump rope, go roller skating.

A. So did not doing homework hold you back?

Q. Hold me back from what? I don't think that there are that kind of standards in the world. Where should a fifth grade girl be? And who determines that? As a parent, I may want my kids to hammer a nail in straight, to put together a model airplane -- to spend time with their grandparents. Where do we get to put that in the educational standards? Where do we say, no, I'm not

going to have them do homework because I want to teach them to take apart a car engine -- that's an important skill. Whatever it is, people have lives they want to share with their children. My ex-husband was Jewish and my children never could go to a Passover Seder the whole time we lived in Bar Harbor because they always had too much homework. Now I could have written a note, but they didn't want me to, they felt they had to do the homework.

Q. So you're saying that homework cuts into the natural education that goes on in a family?

A. The family is where your culture gets carried on. We kind of lose that, because we don't have time to share those things with the kids. The family is where your culture gets carried on -- my roots, my culture, are things that I pass on to my kids by the holiday food I cook, that's Eastern European, or things I want to teach, that my mother taught. We kind of lose that, because we don't have time to share those things with the kids.

Q. But most people just watch TV at night. You really think it's better to watch TV -- things like *Wheel of Fortune* than do homework?

A. I don't watch TV, but there's a tremendous amount of social interaction going on when a family watches TV together at night, and kids get embedded with all kinds of values. That just may be the way we share our values now, and maybe it's not so bad, maybe it's preferable to having one kid crying in their room because he doesn't get the math homework, and another on the phone getting all the answers from her friends.

Q. Anything else?

A. I would hope that as this new school year starts and parents go to Back to School Nights, and schools announce their homework policy, that parents begin to ask questions: about the purpose of homework, about what they have to give up as parents ... and maybe hold the school people more accountable for what goes on in the amount of time that kids are in school, and why as a parent I am required to be a teacher of subject matter that I know nothing about.

Donna Gold is a free-lance writer living in Stockton Springs.

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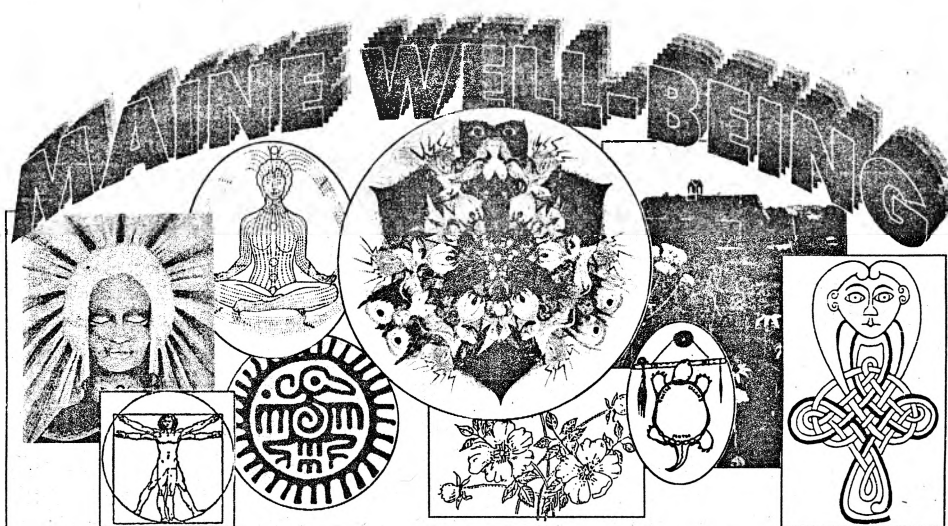
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An Inner Odyssey and Guide

Christina's World

by Rhea Cote Robbins

I went to visit the Olson House in Cushing, depicted in *Christina's World*, with my husband. There is a guest book which asks why you came. I wrote: Because my *maman* had been there before me.

My *maman*, a deep-in-the-culture Franco-American woman, adored the painting *Christina's World*. In the early 1970s, I decided one Christmas that I was going to buy it for her. I searched all the furniture stores in Waterville, and then finally in one store's gift department, I found a large framed print of *Christina's World*. I brought it home and gave it to my *maman* immediately. I could not believe my good fortune in finding just exactly what I was looking for. I wondered, when visiting the house in Cushing, where would a Franco-American woman far removed from the culture of the art world get the idea of wanting to possess the painting.

My *maman* had been obsessed with the whole story which the painting invites. She visited the Olson House before it became a museum. She and my father took a ride to find the house. When she got there, I remember my *maman*'s disappointment about the ordinariness of the old house. I'm not sure what she had expected, but still she had made a pilgrimage to her sacred site.

Where did my *maman* get the notion of her private cult and pilgrimage for *Christina's World*? This was not a Franco-American woman's usual stance.

Decorations in her house were mostly family photos, religious artifacts or art bought at the grocery store during one of their sales campaigns of the man praying over his bread in a green shirt which she had purchased with her Top Value stamps. That one was hung in the dining room. *Christina's World* was hung over the couch in the living room just behind where she sat. Where my father liked to have her sit, with him, to keep him company nights as they watched TV. She was always hand-sewing, knitting or crocheting. Habits of the hands which were taught to never be idle since when she, her *maman* and sisters would sit at night and knit.

I think my *maman* recognized in Christina women's struggles to make it in this world. No matter what happened, if you had to get there, you could always crawl. Or, you could even choose to crawl. Christina was a strong metaphor of the challenges, the daily things to overcome, for my *maman*. When my *maman* was alive, I never thought about what the painting might represent to her, but it has occurred to me lately that the crippledness of Christina is something she felt close to. There was a recognition in the art work for *maman* of herself on the grass. A re-peopleing of the painting with her own image. An association of like spirits struggling with questions unanswered or unanswerable. Bruised and wounded finding solace in the silence of a painting speaking volumes of meaning.

Held under its spell, not knowing its full text as I do now, I can understand that Christina represented the determination of fighting back for *maman*. Christina,

with difficult ease, was able to attain what it is she wanted or needed. The intersection of a common life with the art world in Christina's case was also the case for my *maman*. Her common life explained in a painting that she loved.

When I visited the Olson House, I was haunted not only by Christina's presence, but by my *maman*'s. She too had walked on the land around the house before me. Why? She had her own world. What more could a woman want?

The renown of Christina through the painting attests to possession of her world as a spiritual and sacred space for me, because my *maman* had been there before and found explanation for herself in that space. She possessed the painting, the expression and the view of the actual place. She left her small, but complex, Franco-American neighborhood to travel clear across the state to find the place where Christina's world was in reality. I went because *maman* had gone. I went to find my *maman*'s spirit, except I did not realize I would find it until I had arrived.

Cote Robbins may be contacted at The Franco-American Women's Institute, 641 South Main St., Brewer, ME 04412-2516; Internet: FAWI2000@aol.com; Web Pages: <http://members.aol.com/FAWI2000/index.html>; to subscribe to the Listserv: In a body of a message addressed to Listserv@maine.maine.edu, write -- Subscribe FAWIEMM-L your name.

Bangor Women's Health Care Centers Merge

by Melissa MacCrae

Bangor -- Women's Health Care officially merged with the Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center on Oct. 1. The move represents yet another dream come true for the founders of both entities, who always planned to join their women-centered health centers to provide comprehensive women's health-care services in the Greater Bangor area.

The two entities are cut from the same cloth philosophically, so established clients and patients can expect seamless services consistent with their expectations. The former patchwork formed by the separate agencies will be stitched together to form a multiservice quilt to cover the area's women.

Ruth Lockhart, MWWHC's executive director, and Terry Marley-DeRosier, of BWHC both consider themselves lucky to have founded and volunteered at MWWHC. Lockhart volunteered her time for 10 years before becoming the center's executive director in 1992.

Meanwhile, Marley-DeRosier started Bangor Women's Health Care in 1985 as a way for her to continue to practice as a nurse practitioner, working in collaboration with Dr. Parker Harris, a Bangor OB/GYN practitioner. In the back of their minds, the two women realized that this would be an integral part of any potential union.

Helped by a loyal group of volunteers, Lockhart developed the growing list of services that are available to women from pubescence through the menstrual years and beyond menopause. Co-founder, Marley-DeRosier, has clocked more than 1,000 hours of volunteer time.

At the heart of MWWHC's services is a focus on education and support that allows women to make informed decisions about the most intimate and natural aspects of a woman's life. On Sept. 22, 1995, the Maine Civil Liberties Union presented the Roger Baldwin Award "with great appreciation to the Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center."

MWWHC's list of services has grown during its 12-year tenure to include basic and specialized

women's health-care needs. Marley-DeRosier's entrance will allow the center to add prenatal care to those services.

Fourteen years after the women's first discussion, the time was ripe. MWWHC's financial stability, coupled with strong community support for the merger have made it happen. Bangor Women's Health Care will officially cease to exist as a single entity, to become an integral facet of the MWWHC.

A little tongue in cheek, Marley-DeRosier said they conceived the plan years ago, and now, Lockhart added, they have given birth to a new development.

The addition of Marley-DeRosier and Teresa Kelley, a medical assistant, will allow the center to provide basic services five days a week, including prenatal care. BWHC clients number more than 2,250 active cases, plus about 100 prenatal patients.

Available hours of service will increase from 35-40 monthly to nearly 160 hours per week. Marley-DeRosier said that she and Lockhart will ease their clients' transition to the new site, where they will "see the same old faces, plus a couple of new ones," so established patients will be comfortable.

"Fourteen years ago, we thought it would happen," she said. "But those 14 years felt like a roller-coaster ride, with severe ups and downs."

Now, besides a larger new facility, BWHC patients will benefit from the consistent philosophy of care as they join the MWWHC and move to its new and larger space in the Intown Plaza on Harlow Street in Bangor sometime in November.

Among other things, the merger will enhance women's accessibility to health-care services provided by the MWWHC and will fill the gap for on-site clinical expertise to assess clients' needs that were formerly available only by referral. Marley-DeRosier, as a nurse practitioner, will provide women's well care and prenatal care. Deliveries and anything beyond the purview of her training will be handled by Dr. Parker Harris, who will see their mutual patients at his office to establish a rapport with the pregnant mothers before delivery. Marley-DeRosier will then pick up with postpartum care for those patients.



Terry Marley-DeRosier (left) and Ruth Lockhart.

MWWHC's target population is women who have not received consistent well-care focusing on prevention. Increased full-time staffing will also allow clients to be examined the same day, rather than being referred to a doctor or the emergency room for services that couldn't wait for the next available time. While services are not free, the center's private nonprofit status allows it to keep basic women's health-care costs as low as possible; time payments are available if necessary. The merger will also allow MWWHC to bill insurers on behalf of covered clients.

A true feminist health center, and the sole free-standing entity of its kind in Maine, MWWHC advocates within the political process to work for women's sexual and reproductive rights and to raise community awareness of those issues that affect women and their families. In its literature, MWWHC considers its role in maintaining a woman's right to choose abortion and advocacy for lesbian/gay rights of utmost importance. MWWHC's pledge not to accept restrictive monies allows it to carry out its mission without compromising its freedom of choice posture.

"It's yet another dream come true," Lockhart said. "We are visionaries. It's been a long time since the beginning in 1984."

Ethical Investing

by F. Weidner

Based on statistical studies, and perhaps because women are more conservative in their approach to investing, they tend to pay insufficient attention to the risk of inflation affecting their future nest egg. Financial advisers seem to have encouraged this through their own ignorance, strongly advising women to shun growth investments such as stocks, in favor of bonds (or bond mutual funds), money market funds, CDs, and so on. This appears to avoid risk because they have less (or no) price fluctuation, but a recent article in *Barrons* (Oct 13, 1997, page 23) suggests that using bonds in a portfolio is a questionable method of managing risk and do not avoid the risk of inflation. Simply put, if you set aside \$10,000 today to buy a car in 10 years, the value of the investment had better keep up with increases in car prices 10 years hence. Historically, money market funds (MMFs), CDs and most bonds have not done this. Stocks and well-managed stock funds have.

Does that mean that you should run out and put all of your nest egg into stocks or Pax World mutual fund? No. There is timing risk in jumping into any class of investment at once, and all the more so in stocks because they have risen greatly in recent years. Better yet, one can put 5 to 10 percent of the nest egg into such things, reinvest the dividends and periodically add to it. As you better learn risk management (for example owning at least seven stocks or a fund), you can also learn how to minimize commissions and other costs of investing. A few years in advance of needing your investment monies for a purchase you would reverse the stock buying process by systematically selling

them. By definition, investments are set aside for at least several years, preferably longer.

How difficult is it to invest your money in a way that is consistent with your values of fairness, nonsexism and environmental sanity?

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- The first woman on "Wall Street" runs a competent, pro-feminist discount brokerage firm accessible by either phone or the Internet (Muriel Siebert).
- The most balanced ethical mutual fund (Pax World) and one of the best long-term stock investments (Johnson & Johnson, voted 1997 "best company for Mothers") are sensitive to women's issues.
- The best ethical investment writers are women (Susan Meeker-Lowry and Amy Domeni).
- Several excellent women's Web Sites have socially responsible financial writers (wommenconnect).

NOTE: In Maine we can go to Internet sites for free at the state library or at most local libraries thanks to the very competent staff and provisions by NYNEX.

Siebert Brokerage, 1-800-872-0711; Web Site: <http://www.siebert.com/>; Pax World, 1-800-767-1729; Web Site: <http://www.paxfund.com/>; Wommenconnect's Web Site: <http://www.wommenconnect.com/>

F. Weidner is an ethical stock picker, an investment adviser registered in Maine and receives no commissions or fees for products or services mentioned in this column. Please send investment questions you wish answered to Feminist Times.

moody views...

by Linda Hertell

Q: Dear Linda,

Please help me. I'm so tired of feeling drained and unhappy. I'm always exhausted and never seem to have any energy or motivation to get things done. Almost every day after work I either sit in front of the TV for hours, or I go straight to bed, and don't get up until the next morning. But I'm still so fired I can't stand it. My house is a wreck and my kids are fending for themselves. So far, I'm doing OK at work, but I know I'm making mistakes I shouldn't, because I can't concentrate and my memory is shot. Pretty soon someone is going to notice and I'm afraid I'm going to lose my job.

I went through this once a few years ago and my doctor told me to take vitamins, get some exercise, and do something nice for myself. It didn't seem to work at first, but a few months later, I did feel better. Is this depression? Why can't I pull myself out of this?

Signed, "Help".

A: Dear "Help,"

From where I sit it sure sounds like you're dealing with depression, especially since you've been through a similar episode before and seem to have recovered for awhile before heading into another episode. Depression is a very serious illness that is both diagnosable and treatable, and should never be ignored. Please rest assured that true depression is a biochemical imbalance of the brain, and not the result of laziness, malingering or a weak personality.

But... there also could be any number of other medical conditions causing your symptoms, and you really need to have a complete physical to find out what's going on. A physical should

rule out other possibilities, such as hypothyroid, mononucleosis, and chronic fatigue.

Unlike many other illnesses, depression isn't currently diagnosed by blood test or biopsy. Therefore, your doctor must depend on three types of information to make a diagnosis: your past and current symptoms and health, a family history and a complete blood work-up, urinalysis and EKG to rule out any other possible causes of your symptoms. Your family history is vital, as many illnesses are genetically based, including depression; so your doctor will want to know if anyone else in your family has had symptoms or a diagnosis of depression, bipolar disorder (manic depression), alcoholism, eating or anxiety disorders, or obsessive-compulsive disorder. (Unfortunately, these illnesses do tend to clump together in families.)

Luckily, depression is treatable for most. So don't give up until you've found the right combination of treatments that work for you: 1) traditional: doctors and medications (to alleviate the symptoms, 2) counseling (to understand how your illness affects you and those around you), 3) self-help (people with the best prognoses are those who know the most about their illnesses), and 4) alternative holistic strategies (not for everyone, but can be very helpful).

Please call your doctor, and make sure you get a real diagnosis. Good luck.

QUICK FACTS: 17.6 million Americans cope with the effects of depression. According to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the impact of depression on American industry is \$43.7 billion each year in lost productivity, mistakes, medical bills, and even suicide.

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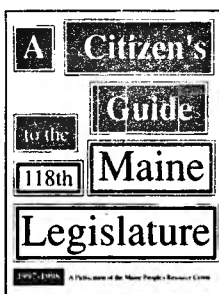
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Honoring Women in the Arts

In the Spotlight ~

Jan Owen, book artist

by Donna Gold

Six years ago, Jan Owen made a decision: "Mornings are mine."

Owen is an artist living in Bangor whose work is handmade, calligraphic books that can be mounted on walls. These books -- filled with flowing line, dramatic flourishes and calligraphic text -- are like visual music. They incorporate the movement, the intensity, the lyricism, the rhythm, even the silence of music. Added to that is the texture of sculpture, plus the literary grounding of poetry.

These are not books with pages you can turn; her books are more celebratory suggestions of the book with covers opening onto one large page that is covered with paint and hand-written text in Gothic or Uncial lettering. Easily hung on a wall, Owen's books often look more like a painting with folds, something like a post-modernist reference to a book. In yet another form, Owen slices printed paper into narrow slivers. The books still open, but inside are a fringe of papers with words that could perhaps be read -- with eyes the size of a mouse's.

These mornings have proven powerful. Four years ago, Owen's calligraphy appeared in the Portland Museum of Art's craft show, *Makers '93*. Last spring, her work was among 14 artists shown in the Portland Museum of Art's *Perspectives: The Art of the Book* show, featuring cutting edge contemporary work by Maine artists. She has also moved from simply penning invitations to sales across the world via several one-woman shows at local galleries.

It's likely that none of this would have happened if this friendly, bright-voiced, rather pixie-like woman with graying dark hair hadn't decided to take back her mornings from the calligraphic work she had been doing since her children, twins who are now in college, were babies. And that decision, she says, came out of a near-tragedy.

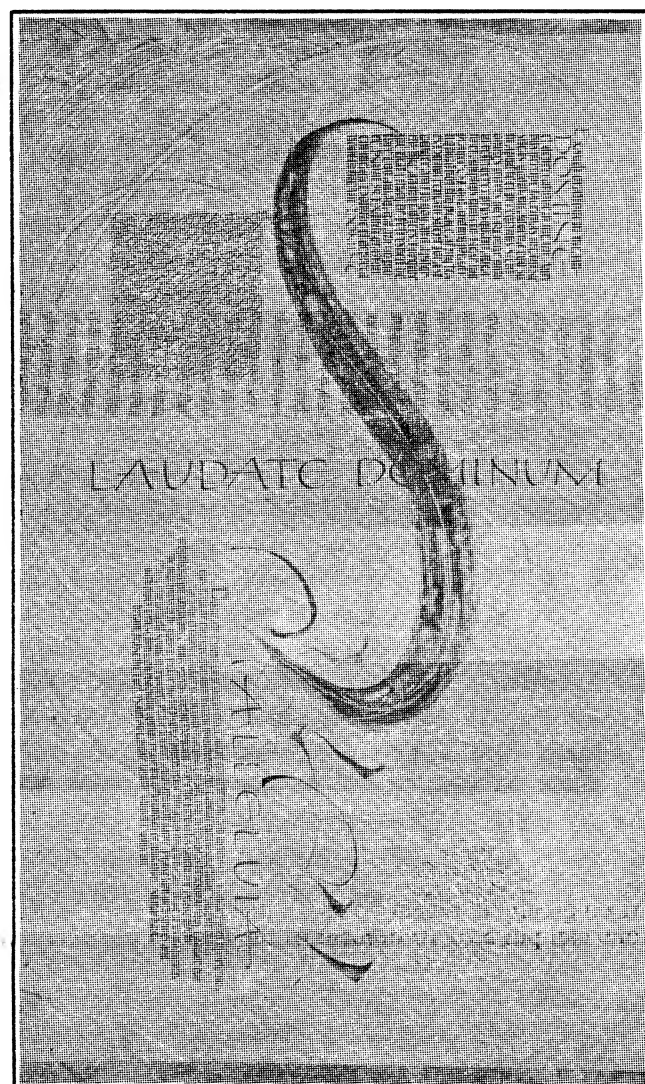
Over six years ago, Owen found herself inexplicably and quite seriously ill. She had to be

admitted to the hospital before doctors discovered her wasting illness was caused by an allergy to wheat, oats, rye and barley. Recovering, Owen decided to use what she calls the "grace of time," to reconsider her work. "My kids went off to school at 7 a.m. I decided to work to 11 a.m. at my own work," she explains. "I turned on the answering machine, turned off the volume, told my husband not to bother saying good-bye before he went off to work" -- and focused. Even with her daughters in college, she still keeps to the schedule.

"Mornings are mine," she repeats. "It's not always easy, there are days when nothing happens," but she remains with her work. Afternoons she does her commissions, which she sees as akin to a musician's scales. Her work as a calligrapher is her practice, the time when the rhythm of her craft can be ingrained in her hands, readying her for her morning "performance" of bookmaking.

Last month, Owen gave a workshop for children on drawing to music for the Bangor Symphony Orchestra, with whom she played for two decades. Inspired by music, Owen's books are created in layers, as if the tiers of work were the artist's version of pages. First comes paste paper, which is not paper at all but a kind of thick, gooey paint used to create the endpapers of early books. Owen makes her own, cooking flour and water, tinting it with acrylics. She then paints her first layer, working the paste paint like fingerpaint, using fingers and hands to turn the paint into a flowing pattern broken up by geometries that come from various tools, among them the simple plastic scraper that masons use in laying tiles. Here begins the rhythm. Once finished, this background layer may look like a duo-toned abstract painting. As Owen holds a sheaf of her paste paper scraps, each strip colored and patterned, she says she often wishes she could end her work there, with the paint, but feels she can't.

From the subtlety of the paint, Owen moves to drama, brushing a black flourish reminiscent of



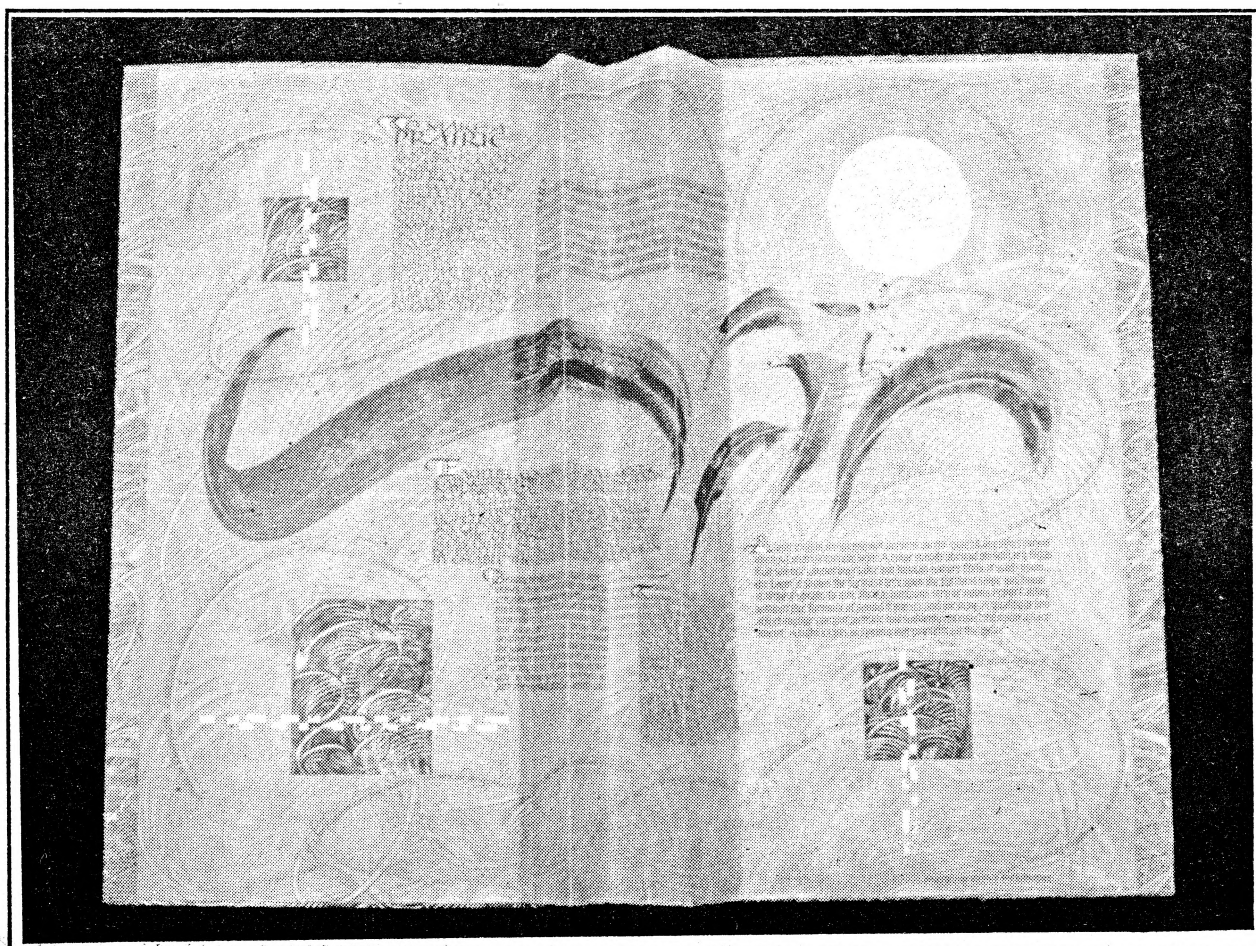
Oriental calligraphy onto the page. Again, the form of the flourish is as much musical as visual. And as she describes her work, the form seems to become physical, as Owen's face animates and her hands gesture largely, imitating the brush. Then comes the text, written in close, black letters. With the text, a theme emerges. In the piece called *War Requiem*, Owen's excerpts come from the text Benjamin Britten used in his *War Requiem*, including Wilfred Owen's *War Poems*. In a lovely, flowing piece inspired by Igor Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, Owen pens the psalms that inspired Stravinsky. Other pieces use poetry by Emily Dickinson and the German poet Rainer Maria Rilke.

The layering continues. After the text may come a weaving of narrow strips of silver and gold paper. These strips form blocks of texture that add a domestic geometry to the page, like that of a patchwork quilt. They also echo the form and shape of the words. Then comes a time of silence, of waiting, looking and listening, to see if the piece is done.

An avid reader, as well as a musician, Owen's bookmaking is itself a weaving of many traditions, connecting her to the ancient tradition of calligraphic manuscripts that first inspired her and to the words of contemporary poets the lead her forward: "It's everything that I love put together," she exclaims. As she speaks, her hands follow the excitement of her voice and her large, flowing gestures echo the silver and gold brushed ones that swirl through her books.

Jan Owen's work can be seen at "Paper Work" at Maine Coast Artists in Rockport, Clark House Gallery at 128 Hammond St. in Bangor, in January and February. When the Bangor Public Library opens in 1998, one of her "books" has been commissioned to be part of the library collection, framed and hung on the wall.

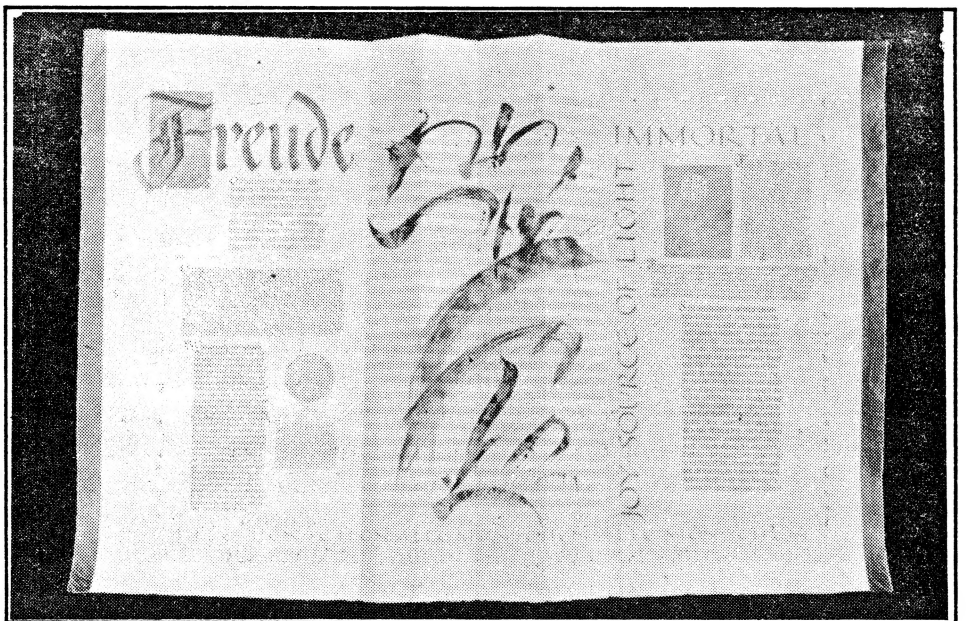
(See more photos on page 10.)



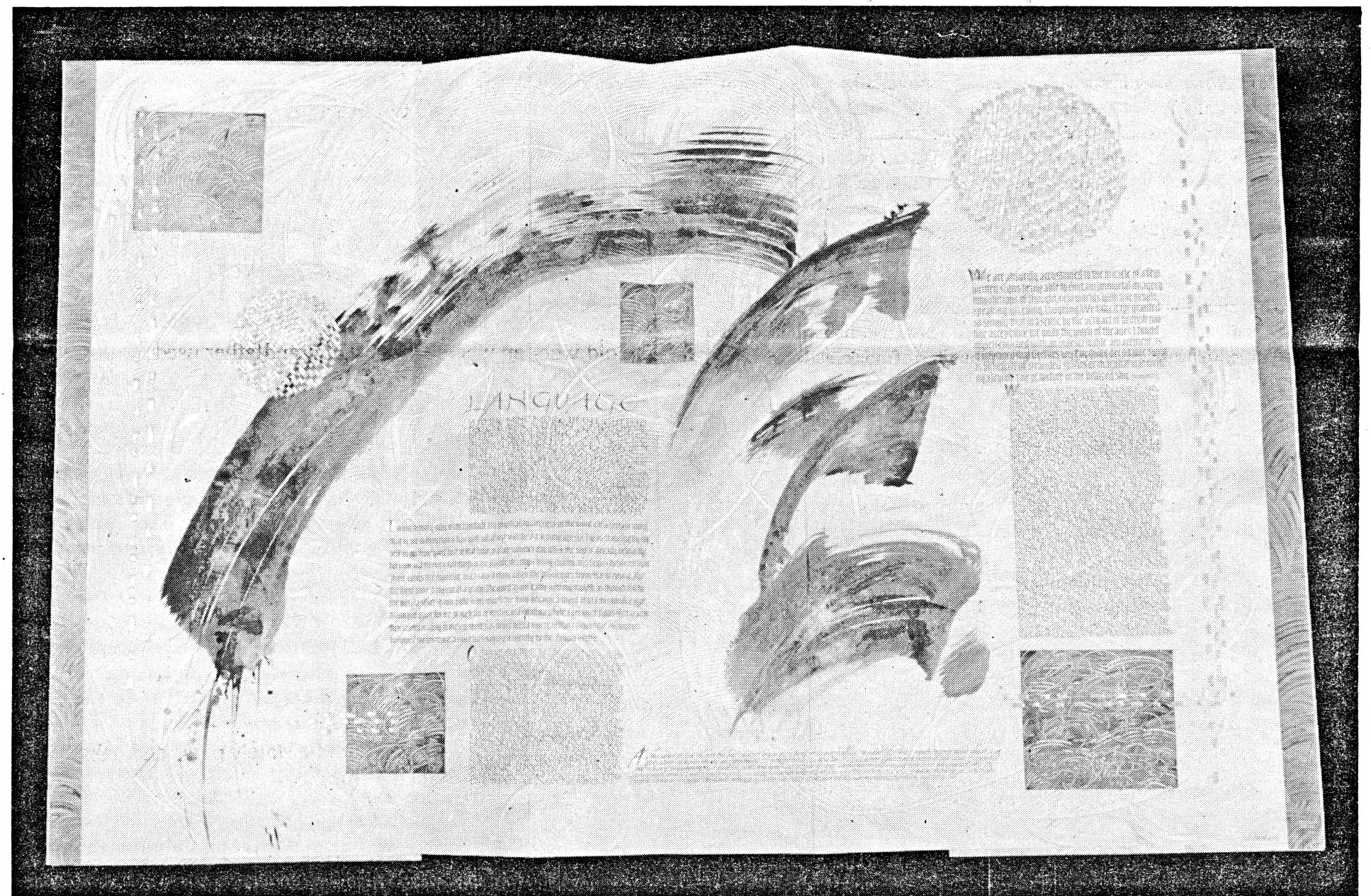
... more book art by Jan Owen



War Requiem. Gouache on paste paper.



Freude. Text from Beethoven's 9th Symphony. Gouache on paste paper.



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Arlene and George Vandeventer will be honored at a special evening of poetry and music at the Camden Public Library at 7 p.m. on Nov. 5 at the meeting of the Live Poets Society.

Book Review • Prose • Poetry

Blowing Away Impermanence and Disconnection

THE CLOISTER WALK

by Kathleen Norris

Riverhead 1997 paper 392 pgs \$12.50

Review by Ellen LaConte

"Ten years ago ... I became a Benedictine oblate," writes Kathleen Norris in the opening to this evocative memoir. The original meaning of "oblate" is "offering." It was in a spirit of offering herself to something supernatural that Norris a then-fortyish, casually Protestant married woman, farmer and poet, made her commitment as a lay associate to the rules of a 1400-year-old Catholic monastic order. "I can't imagine why God would want me, of all people, as an offering," she said humbly to her oblate director at St. John's Abbey in Minnesota. "But if God is foolish enough to take me as I am, I guess I better do it." Two extended residencies followed. Many spiritual journeys begin with this kind of almost whimsical leap of faith. The whimsical leap is almost always followed by a more or less deliberate, patient trudging toward enlightenment which, whether you are a Catholic, Unitarian, Methodist, Buddhist or "none of the above" comes, if it comes at all, by an entirely unpredictable combination of effort and grace.

Why did Norris leap? To make the effort to meet that gift of grace halfway. Like most of us, she was looking for meaning. The sense that there is an essential glue that binds the ceaseless, often harsh or mindless busyness of our days. A coherent point to the mundane, problematic business of existence that would make it worth soldiering on and tie her walk in the world to something larger and more permanent. At St. John's she found a deeper consciousness, direction and a path to connection.

Norris thought her marriage, her career, her relationship with her local Presbyterian congregation, and her conscientious life on the land and in her rural community (about which she wrote

divinely in the best-selling *Dakota: A Spiritual Geography*) were an "adequate substitute for religion." They weren't. She realized they could all be blown away like topsoil on the fierce northern Plains winds. Impermanence and disconnection are facts without any comfort in them. Norris was searching for the comfort. Wisely, she did not presume that comfort would in the least resemble ease, rather it would come in the form of understanding. Her book is rich with it.

It is said that religion is the tie that binds us to the Larger Life and our higher selves, but I've often found that the church does the opposite. I am wary of the sky god religions' patriarchal dogma and fundamentalist dogmatism and have little regard for the diminished, tyrannical, manly thing we've made of whatever God is. I've been rummaging around in the Tao and Zen hoping that their gender-free spaciousness and novelty might re-engage me, but I see that I too might have learned from Norris's Benedictines.

In a series of vignettes, short essays and contemplations based loosely on the monastery's cycle of saints' days and sacred feasts, Norris introduces us to communities of monks and nuns who, like the rest of us, are flesh and blood, imperfect, aging, uncertain folk trying to find their way. They fare by means of prayer and *lectio divina* -- holy readings -- and the tedious, often difficult daily practices of patience with themselves and each other, loving kindness and hard-won trust in God's having a will and a way for them. They read the Psalms as if the verses described current events, knowledge of which could save their lives, which Norris found they often do. They read the lives of saints as intently as we read *People* magazine. Two guesses which of us gets more bang for our buck.

Norris rescues celibacy from the status of psychosis. For many monastics sexual abstinence is not only a willing self-denial, but a kind of restraint that urges what is merely physical and one-on-one into a more generalized expression of compassion, tenderness, and acceptance, -- love.

Perhaps most importantly for readers of the *Feminist Times*, Norris puts such thorny theological concepts as evil, judgment, gender exclusiveness and the expectation of perfection into perspective. The rules that govern her Benedictines are decidedly homey, practical, feminist and woman-valuing. Several chapters explore the courageous lives of virgin martyrs whose significance for contemporary women, particularly young women and girls hoping to get away with "just saying no" to testosterone-driven young men, is profound. The words of medieval woman mystics like Hildegard, Mechtilde, Julian of Norwich, and Theresa of Avila and of male feminists like Meister

Eckhart and Thomas Merton, remind us that behind the church's patriarchal posturing and macho bravado is a tradition that equally valued women with men, that used gender-free terms for God and presumed the Holy Spirit to be God's pervasive feminine aspect, and that put first the hard, hospitable, hands-on work of caregiving.

Norris' journey toward 'a working and workable faith is a model that opens new doors onto the gifts of the heart and, at least in my case, the mind.

Ellen LaConte is a free-lance writer, biographer to the late Helen Nearing and author of *On Light Alone, a meditation on the death of Helen Nearing*.

SUMMER KITCHEN

by Jan Anderson

I remember when an oak tree grew there close to the porch cut down now to save the roof it leaned over.

The old folks' rocking chair is still here, moving in time to the wind stirring the trees, the water breaking on the shore.

The old wooden wheelbarrow that grandfather used to bring firewood to the summer kitchen still holds its shape, sheltered at the far end of the porch.

The wood stove is gone now, its place taken by bunk beds and chests of drawers.

Great-grandchildren run about the Place leaping off the island, pausing on the footbridge, sailing the sunfish back and forth.

Soon they will go, leaving behind the stately pines and oaks whose leaves will reclaim the paths for another year.

Snow will pile up by the porch and the frozen lake will crack in the cold ight air.



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Book Review Book Review Book Review Book Review... Continued

Have you Been in the Woods Today?

How to Shit in the Woods

Kathleen Meyer
Ten Speed Press

BOOK Review
by Katy Perry

In the introduction to her book, Kathleen Meyer wrote, "For many millennia our ancestors squatted successfully in the woods. It would follow that everyone would know how by instinct. Nature simply takes its course when a colon is bulging or a bladder bursting. But "its course" I cheerlessly and laboriously discovered, was subject to infinite miserable destinations.

If you haven't already surmised, I am speaking about the 1989 publication of a book that -- to date and with a 1994 release -- has circulated more than 300,000 copies. *How To Shit in the Woods* is not a funny book, although, it brings smiles when read. It is a serious tome about the need to tend to natural physical needs in the most environmentally right manner.

I first learned about the book more than five years ago when it was reviewed in a natural resources newsletter. I found a copy in a bookstore where a customer was having a bad time explaining the title of a book she wanted to own.

"I would like a copy of that book on camping," she told the clerk.

"Oh, you mean this one on mountain climbing," the clerk said as she picked up a copy from the counter.

"No, not that one, I mean the one that tells how to 'do' it when you are camping."

"I guess I don't understand what you mean."

"Oh, you know, I bought a copy yesterday and now I want another one for a friend. It tells about what you do

when you have to go and you are in the woods."

"Oh, you mean, *HOW TO SHIT IN THE WOODS*," the clerk answered as she strode over to the section where camping books were housed.

"Oh, dear, I just can't use that word, my mother always scolded and vowed she would wash my mouth with soap if did."

Right then and there I knew I had to own this book. I bought a copy, read it, was impressed and loaned it to a friend. Wrong move. I forgot what friend, and, obviously, she forgot who had loaned it to her.

A few days ago, I saw another copy, a newly revised and enhanced copy and bought it. Not only is it genuinely useful information, but it makes delightful reading. Funny how comic it is to read such a line as: "Shit is a superb word, really. ... I propose to help wash this great word, shit, downstream to its greater maturity and on into the ocean of acceptable usage."

I seriously doubt my mention of this small book will do much to sell it, yet I concur completely with Meyer in believing our puritanism -- or some other such hang-up -- has made a perfectly useful word a no-no. In fact, "shit" is a helpful expletive, I find, when things get fouled up, as they often do in daily life.

So. Your introduction to *How To Shit in the Woods*, published by Ten Speed Press of Berkeley, Calif., is complete. I am certain you can find it in a local bookstore, and as the Detroit Free Press comments, "If you need to know the etiquette of elimination in the great outdoors, this is the book."

Katy Perry is a free-lance writer who lives in Hallowell.

Traveling into the Interior

AUTUMN SEA

by Toke Hoppenbrouwers
Astarte Shell Press: Portland

by Linda Berg

Autumn Sea is a multi-tiered, multi-layered novel that reaches the page like breath. It is a romantic, passionate, tough-tender love story between two women, the narrator and Lesly, that is edgy because these characters are always sowing the seeds of suspense along the way about how the relationship will resolve itself. The tone of the novel runs the gamut from dreamy nostalgia to a more often experienced rough-edged toughness. It is like music in its rhythmical, measured prose style.

Early in the book, Lesly gives the narrator the gift of a green ring. "It was the first and last romantic present I received from her." This is an example of the way beginning and ending are foreshadowed throughout. These characters travel the ambiguous and tortuous path love sometimes takes. In another scene, the narrator and her former lover, Ene, kiss. The encounter is so charged that it feels as if the romance will be rekindled, but it isn't. What these two have achieved is a really grounded, solid friendship.

There is travel of two kinds in the book. Travel to Israel and Egypt and other places, and travel to the interior of the human heart. The outer travel

becomes a sustaining metaphor for the more inward journey. In a hotel room, Lesly turns a particularly mean-spirited disposition toward the narrator, which brings some discomfort to the reader until a few pages and several miles later the tension is resolved with, "We intuitively know that each of us needs support. I kiss her gently after her angry outburst at the roomboy."

An example of the book's interiority is this observation from the narrator: "I feel a great strength settle in my muscles." And then the short paragraph: "Today I walk on the beach. I am determined to hold on to that strength."

At the end of the novel, the narrator can say, "I have no doubt that Lesly was true to herself and what is more she set me free again, like Ene, gently."

What has been dealt with is the ability to love, forgive and recover from loss. The novel is both sensual and intelligent, and its emotional resonance puts the reader inside the relationships it so powerfully evokes. The writing of this book reflects an author wise about love, relationships and life.

Linda Berg is a free-lance reviewer.

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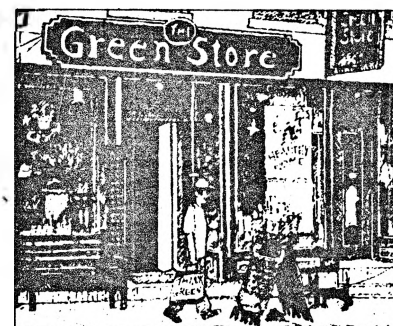
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~'Round'n About With Women~

This datebook page is dedicated to the support of women in the arts. To be included in this acknowledgement, send announcements, press releases and photos.

Items for this page are due by the 15th of the previous month. Send to Calendar Editor, 309 High St., Belfast 04915 e-mail: JDANDERS@acadia.net

AUGUSTA

- **Early Bird Craft Show**, 16th annual United Maine Craftsmen Inc. event, Nov 8, 10-5; Nov 9, 10-4; Augusta Civic Center; admission \$2.
- **100 Years of Maine at Work**, special satellite exhibition from Farnsworth Art Museum, through Dec. 8, Blaine House.
- **Aperture: Contemporary Maine Photography on the Edge of Process**, Governor's State House Gallery, through Jan; 287-2750.

BATH

- **Silhouettes**, photos by Marcie Jan Bronstein; **Buzz**, airborne images by Rebecca Carter; **An Irish Village**, photo-documentary by James McCarthy; all run through Nov 18, Chocate Church, 804 Washington St.; 442-8455.

- **23rd Thanksgiving Craft Show**, United Maine Craftsmen Inc., Nov 28-30, Brewer Auditorium; 621-2818.

BELFAST

- **17th Anniversary Retrospective**, Artfellows Cooperative Gallery, through Nov 15; 338-5776.

BRUNSWICK

- **Self-Publishing Workshop** with Julie Zimmerman, Nov 8, 10-3, Maine Writers & Publishers Alliance, 12 Pleasant St.; to register, 729-6333.

- **Upcountry**, paintings by Marguerite Robichaux, through Nov 15, O'Farrell Gallery, 58 Maine St.; 729-8228.

CASTINE

- **Margaret Manter paintings**, through November, Bath Iron Works Gallery, Maine Maritime Academy; 326-4534.

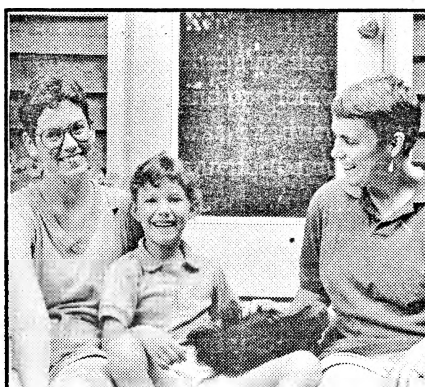
DAMARISCOTTA

- **For the Love of Maine**, paintings by Lynne Gifford, through Nov 28, Miles Memorial Hospital; 677-3459.

FARMINGTON

FARMINGTON

- **Love Makes a Family: Living in Gay and Lesbian Families**, through Dec 4; UMF Art Gallery, 102 Main St.; 778-7001.



LEWISTON

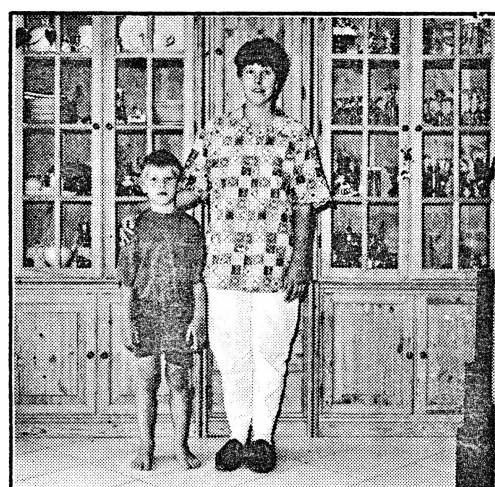
- **Sur Bois**, Work by Franco-American wood carvers of New England, through Dec 13, Atrium Gallery, Lewiston-Auburn College, Westminster St.; 753-6500.

OLD TOWN

- **Florence Wheeler exhibit**, through November, Old Town Public Library, 65 Middle St.

PORTLAND

- **20th Holiday Craft Show**, United Maine Craftsmen Inc., Dec 13-14, University of Southern Maine gym; 621-2818.



- **Elke Morris: Room as Revelation**, through Dec 4; UMF Art Gallery, 102 Main St.; 778-7001.

Workshops, lectures, classes, etc.

BANGOR

- **PICA - Bangor Clean Clothes Campaign Phase II auction**, Peace & Justice Center, Nov 8; FMI: 947-4203.

BLUE HILL

- **Money Empowerment for Women** with Lu Bauer, CPA, Nov 9, 9-12:30, Bouldaire; 359-8323.

BRUNSWICK

- **Women's Discussion Group**, ongoing, first Wednesday at 6; FMI/RSVP 725-0428.

- **Grammar workshop w/ Amy MacDonald**, Nov 8, 1-4, Maine Writers & Publishers Alliance, 12 Pleasant St.; to register, 729-6333, fax, 725-1014.

CAMDEN

- **Panel Discussion with Four Mystery Writers**, focuses on creating dynamic plots and characters, Nov 19, 7-8:30 pm, Camden Opera House; FMI, 729-6333.

DAMARISCOTTA

- **The Art of Interviewing workshop w/ Carol Brightman**, Nov 15&16, 10-3, Round Top Center for the Arts; to register, 729-6333.

- **A Unique Healing Technology seminar**, Nov 16, 2-4, Midcoast (Quaker) Meeting House, Belvedere Road; pre-register, 374-2437; e-mail, judyg@acadia.net.

PORTLAND

- **Screenwriting workshop**, Nov 8, 10-3, Portland Public Library; to register, 729-6333.

- **Arts Every Day conference**, Nov 14, 5:30-7:30; Nov 15, 8:30-2:30, Portland High School; teachers' workshop, Nov 15, 1-2:30; to register, 338-1225.

- **New England Women's Exposition**, 2-day event, Holiday Inn By the Bay, Feb 14-15; FMI 942-6588, toll free, 888-999-6588.

WATERVILLE

- **Illustrating and Writing Picture Books**, Nov 15, Page Gallery and Studio; to register, 729-6333.

Volunteers Needed

The Grand, Hancock County's Nonprofit Performing Arts Center, is looking for volunteers to help at concerts, plays and movies -- ticket takers, ushers, popcorn poppers, poster distributors and general assistance people. Experience is not required. Call Nancy Adams, volunteer coordinator, at 667-7257 (daytime) or 667-9795 (evening).

The Lesbian Health project of the Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center in Bangor will be offering low-cost, lesbian-centered health clinics on the following dates: Nov. 8 and Dec. 13 from 9 a.m.-noon at MWWHC, 334A Harlow St., Bangor. Services provided will include physical examinations, screening and referrals, education and advocacy. Health care will be provided by female practitioners in a lesbian friendly environment. FMI or appointment, call 947-5337.

Women's Business

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Free business clinics:

Nov 4: 9-noon; 6-9 pm; Nov 11: 9-noon; Nov 18: 9-noon; 6-9; Nov 25: 9-noon.

Where: WBDC Main Office, Stillwater Professional Park, Bangor (947-5990); WBDC Satellite Office, 361 High St., Bath (442-7911); Business Information Center of Maine, 35 Canal St., Lewiston (783-2770 or toll free: 1-888-879-4900).

▪ **Business Plan Development:** Identify the components needed in a business plan. Learn to create your vision into a map of your future. Preregistration required, Nov 7, 9-noon, BIC of Maine; Nov 12, 9-noon, SP Park; \$10, WBDC members; \$20, nonmembers.

▪ **Marketing On a Shoestring:** Learn the secrets of low-budget marketing. Bring your questions and brainstorm with the group. Preregistration required, Nov 13, 6-9, BIC of Maine, Lewiston; \$10, WBDC members, \$20, nonmembers.

▪ **How to Create a Business out of What You Love Doing:** Discover your strengths and skills; learn how self-knowledge and product knowledge combine to make a successful business. Preregistration required, Nov 12, 9-noon, SP Park; \$10, WBDC members; \$20, nonmembers.

- **An Introduction to WBDC's Mentoring Program:** Two special meetings for prospective mentors and proteges to find out about WBDC's mentoring program, Nov 12 and 26, 6-9, 361 High St., Bath. Free. Call Mary Denzer, 442-7911.

Regional Groups

- **Bangor Area**
Nov 12, noon-1:30, WBDC's Main Office, Stillwater Professional Park, 36 Penn Plaza (near the Bangor Mall).

Belfast

Women Entrepreneurs of Belfast (WEB), Nov 5, 6, Belfast Free Library, Abbott Room. FMI, Kay Retzlaff, 338-6468.

Hancock County

Nov 13, 6, My Fork in the Road Cafe, Ellsworth. Speaker: Carol Brodeur, Trade Show Savvy (The Cafe does not serve food during the meeting; coffee and tea).

Lewiston Auburn

Nov 12, 6-8, Business Information Center, Bates Mill Complex, second floor, 35 Canal St., Lewiston. FMI, Sonja Christiansen, 888-879-4900, 783-2770.

Millinocket

Nov 5, 6-8, Millinocket Public Library. Call Carol Brodeur, 723-5909.

Piscataquis

Nov 6, 8:30-10 am, Thompson Free Library Meeting Room, Dover-Foxcroft. Speaker: Bonnie Erickson, SBA, The Business Information Center of Maine.

Rockland/Thomaston

No November meeting.
Southern Maine Businesswomen's Network Nov 13, 6:30. Contact Dorrie Roedner, 286-1281 or 284-6420.

Women... In the World



MEXICO

MEXICO CITY -- Three Supreme Court judges in Mexico ruled that violently forcing a spouse to engage in sexual relations was not rape but the "undue exercise of a right."

Offenders will no longer face eight to 14 years in prison without right to probation -- the punishment for those found guilty of rape -- but instead will choose between three to 12 months in prison or a \$100 to \$300 fine.

The decision triggered an outcry among women's and human rights groups.

Patricia Olamendi with the Plural Pro-Victims Group told the press that the Supreme Court ruling "implicitly legitimizes the exercise of violence between spouses."

The verdict was handed down by Supreme Court Justices Luis Fernandez Doblado, Clementina Gil and Victoria Adato. Adato was part of the Mexican delegation to the third women's summit held in 1985 in Nairobi.

The ruling was issued to resolve a contradiction that had arisen from two courts in the central Mexican state of Puebla, both of which considered cases of husbands forcing wives to engage in sexual relations. Only one of the courts ruled that rape had been committed.

The Supreme Court decision states that using violence to impose "normal copulation when

the obligation of cohabitation" exists is not sufficient for the act to be considered rape but "while spouses have the right to sexual relations, they cannot be permitted to achieve that aim through violence." It will be treated according to the article penalizing the undue exercise of a right. All is waived when a spouse attempts to impose copulation while in a state of intoxication, suffering from venereal disease, AIDS, or in the presence of other persons," according to the ruling.

Olamendi with the Plural Pro-Victims Group said the Supreme Court verdict "grants validity to a supposed right, which is nonexistent and denied by numerous documents dealing with the rights and guarantees of individuals."

Another women's activist, Patricia Duarte, said the concept of "the undue exercise of a right" violated the principle of equality between spouses and the constitutional clause that stipulates that no individual can take the law into their own hands, nor use violence to demand a real or supposed right.

Patricia Mercado, a leader of another women's group, said the precedent set by the Supreme Court violated universally accepted norms in civil, criminal, administrative and international law, as well as international treaties to which Mexico is a signatory.

VENEZUELA

CARACAS -- Dina Paez started small, using a low-interest loan to turn her food stand into a restaurant. When it was destroyed in 1989 riots, she didn't give up.

"We were left with nothing," Paez told Hillary Rodham Clinton when the first lady visited the neighborhood where Paez used a second loan to reopen her restaurant, which employs 10 people today.

Other women who met the first lady during President Clinton's visit told of starting a taxi service and a sewing shop with loans from the nonprofit Foundation for the Development of the People's Economy.

The group, run by two former Roman Catholic nuns, has made more than 1,000 loans since 1983. They have been repaid at a rate of 96 percent.

"That's a repayment rate that would be the envy of many commercial banks in my country and elsewhere," said Mrs. Clinton.

Rita Arenas upgraded her taxi service from one small car to a 15-seat bus that carries 1,000 riders a week and takes tourists to neighboring Colombia, 500 miles west of Caracas.

With her service available to employees of the nearby US embassy, Arenas quipped: "I work 24 hours a day."

Four of five people in Venezuela are poor. Activists say private initiatives such as the foundation are proving more effective than many government programs, which are bogged down by corruption and inefficiency.



The University of Southern Maine's Lewiston-Auburn College in Lewiston presents the highly acclaimed photo/text exhibition *Love Makes a Family: Living in Lesbian and Gay Families* in the hall gallery beginning Dec. 5 and continuing through Jan. 2. The college hosts a reception Sunday, Dec. 7, from 2-4 p.m.

Since 1995, the exhibit has toured nationally appearing in churches, synagogues, community centers, museums, public and private schools, colleges, and public libraries. The exhibit consists of portraits of 20 families of diverse racial and economic backgrounds with lesbian or gay members taken by Amherst, Mass., photographer Gigi Kaeser. The exhibit includes text edited from interviews with family members that were conducted by writers Peggy Gillespie and Pam Brown. Together, the words and images in *Love Makes a Family* show a visible and positive way, the existence, love and power of these families.

At the Dec. 7 reception, representatives of the Lewiston chapter of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, the Androscoggin County branch of Maine Speak Out Project, and OUTRIGHT!/Lewiston-Auburn will talk about the work they do. The exhibit's presentation is sponsored by USM's Lewiston-Auburn College with volunteers from the AIDS Coalition of Lewiston-Auburn, PFLAG, and Maine Speak Out Project.

Love Makes a Family was produced by Family Diversity Projects Inc., a nonprofit educational organization devoted to educating communities about family diversity, bias, sexism, racism, and homophobia.

The college is located at 51 Westminster S. Gallery hours are: Mon-Thur, 8-8; Fri, to 4:30; and Sat, 9-1. For more information, call 763-6500.



Dorothea Dix (1802-87), American social reformer. She directly promoted the building of 32 mental institutions in the United States at a time when the mentally ill were routinely imprisoned with criminals and the forgotten.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

■ In December, 1996, the U.S. initiated a UN General Assembly resolution urging states to "pursue vigorously an effective, legally-binding international agreement to ban use, stockpiling, production, and transfer of anti-personnel landmines with a view to completing the negotiation as soon as possible." The resolution passed overwhelmingly -- 155 to zero with 10 countries abstaining. This December a conference will be held in Ottawa, Canada to sign the Ottawa Treaty Process to ban landmines beginning in the year 2000. President Clinton has not endorsed the Ottawa Treaty process. He wants to exempt those landmines the U.S. has in Korea.

■ Currently executive compensation for military contracts is capped at \$250,000 per year per executive. This is the amount corporations may bill the federal government. The White House is proposing to increase this to \$4 million annually for companies like Lockheed Martin, a \$20 billion company.

■ The House of Representatives succumbed to grassroots pressure on June 10 and passed the Arms Trade Code of Conduct to ban weapons sales to dictators and human rights abusers. The Senate recently followed suit. The President will be required to issue an annual report detailing which countries meet the Code's criteria. National security waivers must be requested before arms may be sold to a Code-violator nation. This does not, however, address the question of whether it is ethical to create, produce and sell sophisticated weapons. There is no guarantee a friendly nation today will not be a dictatorship tomorrow.

■ Women's Action for New Directions has launched a campaign to cut defense spending and corporate defense welfare. WAND's *Women Take Action* materials include everything you need to know about the federal budget process, tips on how to talk to your member of Congress about budget priorities and information on how the cuts affect women. Call, 617-643-6740; e-mail: want@world.std.com.

World Federalist Association --Maine Chapter
PO Box 397
Waldoboro, ME 04572
832-6863

WFA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization working to ensure peace, economic progress, environmental protection and human rights through world law and global structures such as a strengthened United Nations. 10/97

Maine NOW (National Organization for Women)
PO Box 4012
Portland, ME 04101
797-8508

The largest feminist grassroots organization in Maine. Active in securing increased women's rights: reproductive freedom, lesbian/gay rights, ERA, economic justice and eliminating racism. Local chapters in Bangor, Brunswick, Farmington, Kennebec Valley and Portland. 7/97

MAINE CENTERS FOR WOMEN, WORK AND COMMUNITY
46 University Drive
Augusta, ME 04330-9410
621-3430

MCWWC provides statewide community based entrepreneurship training and workforce development services to displaced homemakers, single parents and other workers in transition.

Maine Tradeswomen Network
P.O. Box 10813
Portland, ME 04104
797-4801

A bond of tradeswomen finding strength, education and support from each other. Our goal is to share our knowledge and encourage other women to enter the non-traditional work force. 6/97

LET CUBA LIVE
PO Box 245
Brunswick, ME 04011
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We work to normalize US relations with Cuba, by direct action, education and legislative efforts. We also promote discussion of the accomplishments and problems of the Cuban Revolution. 7/97

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In Other Words...

Does Anyone Have the Right to Poison Everyone's Water?

by Nancy Oden

The use of pesticides (herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and rodenticides) worldwide has reached record levels. Tiny amounts can have devastating effects on humans and wildlife, and when pesticides combine in our bodies, the ill effects are multiplied.

Many pesticides are known to act as endocrine (hormone) imitators and disruptors. Minute amounts of these chemicals can damage fetuses in the womb, causing brain damage, decreased sperm counts, undersized and malformed genitalia or hermaphroditism, prostate, testicular and breast cancers, endometriosis, behavioral problems, immune system damage.

ORGANOPHOSPHATES, pesticides, which attack the human central nervous system are widely sprayed on food crops. Many people living in sprayed areas have "Gulf War" symptoms.

ORGANOCHLORINES are also exceedingly dangerous pesticides, including DDT, Dieldrin, Endrin, and Aldrin. They are extremely persistent in the environment. **DIOXIN** is an organochlorine. Studies show that virtually all pesticides are contaminated with dioxin. Organochlorines are stored in our body fat, so that a mother passes some of her toxic load to the fetus (passed through the placenta into the womb), and more when she feeds the baby her own nutrient-rich, but chemical-laden, breast milk.

Pesticide manufacturers are allowed to use **HAZARDOUS CHEMICAL WASTE** as "inert" ingredients in their pesticides even though it is clear by their "hazardous" designation that these chemicals are extremely dangerous in their own right. Imagine it -- in addition to pesticides, we're being forced to breathe and drink hazardous wastes, as well as the dangerous contaminant dioxin! This is truly outrageous and frightening.

When people claim pesticides "break down," we must ask "into what?" We do know that DDT, banned 25 years ago, breaks down into DDE, an endocrine-disrupting chemical that's still here, bio-accumulating in Earth's creatures, causing reproductive problems for eagles and other creatures (like us) high on the food chain.

Who's spraying poisons into the air and water? Other than homeowners' use (which is significant), here are the major sources:

- Agriculture, excepting organic farmers. Sprayed crops include nearly all the food you eat.

- Paper mill and timber interests in Maine's woods, where pesticides are used to kill the hardwoods we need for firewood and building materials. They spray to kill insects, but fish and wildlife are also harmed.

- Electric utilities, along the powerlines, through our woods and waters, as well as in front of your house.

- Aquaculture, the growing of caged Atlantic salmon in our coastal waters. Cypermethrin is dumped directly into the ocean to kill sea lice, a parasite attracted to the mass of caged fish. Cypermethrin, another hormone disrupter, can bounce around in our bodies, turning our bodies' functions on or off. This pesticide is also believed to harm lobsters.

- Dept. of Transportation along roadsides throughout Maine to kill roadside vegetation. The runoff gets into fishing streams. DOT is not obligated to observe legal buffer zones around bodies of water.

- City of Portland sprays its islands for Brown-tail Moth, even though the Parks Dept. admits that will not get rid of the moths. The pesticide drifts into nearby waters, where it can harm lobsters, and the moths are still there. (Cliff Islanders removed moth nests by hand, thereby virtually eliminating the infestation.)

- So-called "lawn care" and "pest control" companies who spray poisons where children and pets play, in people's homes, apartments, office buildings, and even schools -- all of which contribute to the poisoning of our air, water, and bodies.

Most importantly, there is no need for pesticides. From dandelions and roaches around the home to forestry and agriculture, there are clean alternatives. Organic farming, growing

food without toxic chemicals, has grown from \$89 million in 1989 to \$6 billion and climbing.

Because pesticides are so terribly dangerous, and because we have tried legislation and rule-making without success, **CLEAN: Maine** has decided to gather 56,000 signatures to put a Citizen Referendum regarding Pesticides on the ballot in November 1998. If it's voted into law, the Referendum would do four things:

1. ban aerial pesticide spraying anywhere in the State of Maine;
2. ban the introduction of pesticides, whether deliberately or accidentally, into any Maine waters;
3. make the above actions Class A crimes. These would already be Class A crimes under Maine law, but pesticides have been exempted. We believe the law should apply to all equally, and poisoning our air and water should certainly be illegal.
4. allow citizens who live in affected areas to vote on exemptions to pesticide laws.

This Referendum gives the people some control and is the beginning of taking back our democracy. We are not disposable creatures to be poisoned at will for some corporation's profits.

Nancy Oden is leader of **CLEAN: Maine**. She can be reached at 283 Water St., Third floor, Augusta 04330; by telephone at 622-0094; or Cleanmaine@powerlink.net.

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